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ASTOR, LENOX, AND
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"I haven't run away *much*, — only a little," said Bertie, brokenly. p. 42

THE [illegible] STORIES.

CARTER AND HIS BIRDS.

BY

JOSEPHINE FRANKLIN.

[illegible]

BOSTON:

[illegible]

[illegible]

THE MARTIN AND NELLY STORIES.

MARTIN AND THE MILLER.

BY

JOSEPHINE FRANKLIN,

AUTHOR OF "NELLY AND HER FRIENDS," "NELLY'S FIRST SCHOOLDAYS," "NELLY AND HER BOAT," ETC.

BOSTON:

TAGGARD AND THOMPSON,

29 CORNHILL.

1865.

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LIST OF THE

"MARTIN AND NELLY STORIES."

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III. Nelly and her Boat.

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MARTIN AND THE MILLER.

CHAPTER I.

MOSS AND LILIES.

"How beautiful, how beautiful!" cried Nelly.

"What is so beautiful?" inquired Martin.

"This moss," was the reply: "do look at it closely, Martin! It is made up of tiny red cups, or wine-glasses I suppose I ought to call them. They are in the exact shape of a wine-glass. I never saw moss like it before."

"Nor I either," said Martin. "They might answer for the fairies' drinking-

cups. Where did you get it?" Martin clambered into the wagon where Nelly sat, resumed the lines, and drove away from the door of the mill, where they had stopped to leave some corn to be ground.

"I picked it off that old beam that juts out over the door of the mill. While you went in with the bag, I saw it; and by standing on the seat of the wagon, and reaching up with all my might, I seized it. There is plenty more there too."

"When we get back, you must show it to me," said Martin.

They were going far beyond the mill to carry some shoes to be mended to a little old cobbler who had done the patching for the family ever since Martin had lived in it.

"I dare say I ought not to feel so," said Nelly, as they approached the house; "but I do not like cobbling or cobblers."

"Why not?" asked Martin. "How could the world get on without them? Think of folks walking about with their toes sticking out of their shoes for want of somebody to put a patch over them!"

"No," replied Nelly: "think of folks walking about with *new* shoes all the year round! That is what I should like."

"And plenty others would like it too," said Martin; "but, unfortunately, we cannot have all we want. That being the case, cobbling and cobblers are an established fact."

"But think of what a poor ambition,

to want to be only a cobbler!" cried Nelly.

"Ah, Nelly!" said Martin, "how can you tell that Mr. van Ness wants to be only a cobbler? How can you be sure that any one does?"

"Why would they be so if they did not?" persisted Nelly.

"Circumstances are not always under our control," said Martin. "We ought not to despise any one for their trade, no matter what it may be. Who knows how a cobbler, like Mr. van Ness, started in life? how full of hope he was? how certain of success in some pleasant path he had marked out for himself? Perhaps he wanted to be a farmer, like Mr. Brooks, with fine fields to cultivate, a good house for himself and family, and a comfortable barn for his cattle. Who

knows how, little by little, as he grew old, he found that he was never to be what he desired? how each disappointment in business broke down his spirit, and crushed his hopes, till, finally, to put bread in the mouths of his children, he was forced to be a cobbler?"

"Oh, you put the case so *hard!*" said Nelly, quite melted: "somehow, I thought of cobblers as always cobblers."

When Martin delivered the bundle of shoes to Mr. van Ness, Nelly looked at his bent figure, brown hands, and toil-worn clothing, with more pity than she had done before.

"That is a stout wagon," said the old man, as Martin returned to it, after handing in the shoes at the door. "It looks good as new."

"It *is* new," replied Martin. "We

have only used it a little for the last week to cart rails for a fence."

"Fence!" repeated Mr. van Ness with a smile: "in mine country, we have not mooch fence like here."

"How do you get along without, sir?" asked Martin. "I should think the cows would injure your crops."

"No, no!" replied the old man. "We keep cattle in a yard; and the womens cut grass and feed, and take to them every day. We like not so mooch trooble in making fence. I had nice house in mine country, but not mooch fence,—very different house from here;" and he motioned toward his little shanty.

"How did you happen to come over, sir?" asked Martin, with a respectful manner, as became a lad in the presence of gray hairs and honest poverty.

"Oh, war, war, war!" said Mr. van Ness, shaking his head. "War come to mine country, my house get burned, enemy drive away my horse and cow, — nothing left. I starve one, two years: I come over here then with my family."

"O Martin!" said Nelly, when they were out of hearing, and on the way home, — "O Martin! it is just as you said, — poor Mr. van Ness has had such hard times, and seen so much sorrow, that he has been forced to be a cobbler. So, after all, it's not his fault; and I do not believe he likes to patch shoes a bit better than I should."

"I think he does," said Martin: "I think he has learned to be contented. That, probably, was the lesson the Creator intended him to take from his misfortunes."

"Why, how can he be contented?" persisted Nelly earnestly; her antipathy to cobbling not being so easily uprooted.

Martin broke into a good hearty laugh.

"I see," he remarked, "that I had better stop, and leave you to meditate on the subject by yourself. This much I will add, however, that if Mr. van Ness is not moderately contented after what he has suffered, and especially when those soldiers spared the lives of his family, he ought to be."

When they were nearing the mill, Martin said, —

"Don't forget to show me the moss, Nelly. I'll drive slow as we go past."

"There is Mr. Wood standing in the door of the mill," said Nelly. "Do you think it will seem queer if we ask him

to let us get more of it? We can make so many pretty things with it!"

"Queer? No," replied Martin; "but he may not want us to strip the old beam."

"I do not believe he has ever noticed the moss," said Nelly; "so that it will be no loss to him. It is only folks who like such things who have eyes to see them."

"That is very true," returned Martin. "I'll ask: it can do no harm, whether he says yes or no."

"Now he is going in. No: there he is at the door again," said Nelly.

"Mr. Wood," said Martin, stopping the horse, "have you any objections to our taking pieces of moss from this beam? It is a very rare kind; and we should like to have some very much."

"Yes: I know it is a rare kind," answered the miller. "I have often admired those strange little red cups. It is a species that only grows on old wood, I believe. I think it is not moss at all, myself, but a lichen. Well, come to think upon it, I'd rather you would not take it from the beam: I should miss it, and so would little Bertie, we can see it so plain from the mill-window. There is an old lumber-shed at the back of my yard that has plenty growing on its roof. You and Nelly are welcome to as much as you desire from that."

"Thank you, sir," said Martin. "Is it hard to climb? Is it likely to take me long to get on the shed and pick some?"

"Yes," answered the miller: "it is hard to climb. I'll lend you my ladder, and that will make it easier. It is a decayed

old roof; and you must be careful that you don't hurt yourself by breaking through."

"I think, Nelly," said Martin, "that we had better wait until some time when we are here on foot. I do not like to leave the horse."

"Oh! for the matter of that," said the miller good-naturedly, "I'll take care of your horse. You can hitch him to that post; and I'll keep an eye on him."

"It will be *pleasanter*," Nelly ventured modestly to say, "if we get the moss some other day; and then, Mr. Wood, perhaps Bertie will like to be with us, and get some too."

"I dare say he will," rejoined the miller. "I think, myself, that you will have more satisfaction to get it at your lei-

sure. What are you going to do with it, Nelly?"

"Oh, I can make moss-baskets, and picture-frames, and ever so many things!" said Nelly with enthusiasm.

"Well," said the miller, glancing back at his moving machinery, and slowly retiring into the faint mist of meal that prevailed in the room, "you ought to have some then, by all means."

"And Mr. Wood, a hard-working man, has eyes for pretty lichens as well as we have!" cried Nelly in surprise, when they again drove on. "I like him all the better!"

One morning, shortly after this, as Nelly was returning home from an errand to one of the neighbors on which she had been sent by her mother, she met Martin walking in an opposite di-

rection. He held in his hand a basketful of eggs. Nelly saw the snowy tips peeping among the oats in which they were packed.

"I'm taking these as a present from Mrs. Brooks to Aunty Myers," said he.

"I have almost a mind to go with you," volunteered Nelly.

"The mill is such a little way farther," said Martin, "I wish we could both go on, and get your moss: it will use precious time, though. I believe I had better not think of it."

"I'll tell you what I will do," said Nelly. "I'll run home, — I'm almost there now, and I can cut across the field to shorten too, — and I'll ask mother if we can be spared for a little time to go to the mill. If she says yes, I'll hurry down to Aunty My-

ers's house, and meet you there after you have got through your talk about the eggs."

Martin agreed to this proposition; and Nelly ran off as fast as her nimble feet could carry her.

Aunty Myers was at home, and was much gratified with her present. Martin had to wait a few moments while she emptied the basket; which little delay gave Nelly such an advantage, that, when he left the house, he found her breathless and smiling at the door.

"Mother says, 'Go,'" panted she.

They set out together for the mill. "This empty basket," said Martin, "will do to carry the moss in. It can be spread out loosely on the bottom, and then the red cups will not get broken."

They saw Bertie looking out of an

upper window of the mill. He recognized them when they were some distance away, and came out to meet them. He was a bright, pretty-looking child of about eight years of age. He seemed very glad to see them.

"Why, Bertie!" said Martin, "have you turned a little miller? There is flour and Indian-meal on your hair and coat and trousers, just as if you had been hard at work."

Bertie laughed, and looked down at his whitened garments. "Father tells me I'll surely be a miller," said he. "I am always playing about the mill. Have you come after your moss? Father told me you were coming."

"Yes," replied Martin: "we have; but we cannot stay very long. We must hurry home."

"But you would like to stay, wouldn't you?" asked Bertie innocently, and taking Martin's offered hand as they walked.

"Oh, yes!" returned Martin: "I'd like to stay a long while with you, Bertie, if I could."

"It is pleasant at the mill," said Bertie. "I watch the flour making little clouds in the room, sometimes all the while from breakfast to dinner. And then the mill-window! — it is such good sport to look out of the mill-window, and see the wagons drive up, and the men lift out the bags of grain, and carry them in the door. When there are no wagons, I lay my head down on the sill, and half close my eyes, and look over at our pond."

"And what do you see there?" asked Martin.

"Oh! you know the pond looks so pretty when you half shut your eyes," said Bertie. "When the sun shines, it makes it seem like diamonds. It is full of water-lilies now."

"Lilies!" said Nelly. "Do you mean white ones, Bertie, or the yellow kind?"

"White," answered the child; "white and large and round. I like the bud best; but mother likes the lilies."

"How I would enjoy getting some!" said Nelly. "Do they grow near the bank, Bertie?"

"No," said Bertie. "Mother says they did once; but the village boys have pulled them all up."

"How do you get at them?" asked Martin.

"In our boat," replied Bertie proudly. "Didn't you know father had been get

ting a new boat? He has; and he calls it the 'Albert,' after me."

"Bertie," said Nelly, "is your name Albert? I thought it was only Bertie."

"That is my nickname," said Bertie. "Come round this way, and I'll show you where father keeps the boat chained. We have to chain it, the boys are so bad. Sometimes, when father is not home, they climb into it, and push it about as far as the chain will let them. And, would you believe?" added Bertie, with a little face of serious concern, "the more I ask them to get out of it, the more they stay in it."

"If I were in your boat, Bertie," said Martin, giving the small hand a gentle pressure, "and you asked me to leave it, I should jump out as quick as could be. They must be very sad boys indeed."

"No," said wise Bertie, "not sad, but bad, Martin. Mother says she does not think they have been taught good manners."

They caught a glimpse of the boat, a small, delicate skiff, floating on the smooth surface of the pond. It was painted in broad stripes of black and red. The tall bushes that grew about the pond obstructed a full view. Nelly took care to look for the water-lilies before they turned away. She saw large, flat, green leaves at a distance, but detected nothing else.

By this time, the miller came to the door to find Bertie.

"Oh, there you are!" said he: "I did not know where you could be going so fast."

"I only went to meet Martin and

Nelly," said Bertie, not releasing his companion's hand, but skipping beside him like a frolicsome kitten. "They have come for their moss."

"Have they?" responded Mr. Wood, looking kindly at the visitors. "I am very glad to see them. Come through this way, children; and I will point out the shed to you."

They walked after him through the mill, as he led them. Nelly was bewildered by the machinery near which they passed; but, in her own mind, she agreed with Bertie, that it was pleasant to see the great mass of drifting meal, making, as he called it, "clouds in the room." Leaving the mill, they entered an enclosed yard, at the extremity of which stood the shed.

"Bertie will show you where to find

a ladder," said Mr. Wood, hurrying back again. He heard the sound of wheels stopping at the door of the mill.

"It's a great big ladder," said Bertie, "a monstrous ladder, Martin! I am afraid you cannot lift it. *I* cannot."

"But, if it is a great big ladder, I'm a great big boy," returned Martin, thinking it very likely that eight-year-old Bertie could not indeed lift it.

"It's under this cherry-tree," said Bertie. "Perhaps, if I help, we may be able to stir it together."

What was Bertie's astonishment to see Martin raise the ladder unaided, place it on his shoulder, and walk rapidly toward the shed! He followed, running, giving utterance to his wonder; while Nelly stood under the tree, an amused spectator.

"Now, Nelly," said Martin, "as the moss is for you, I think you ought to have the pleasure of getting it."

He placed the ladder steadily against the wall, and wanted to help her up; but Nelly said she should be just as well satisfied if he got it for her. Martin climbed to the top accordingly, and, cautiously avoiding the weak spots in the roof of which Mr. Wood had spoken, proceeded to pick off some of the finest moss. Bertie ascended the ladder far enough to get a view of the process, and watched all Martin's movements with curiosity and grave respect; the latter feeling having evidently acquired an ascendency since Martin's late feat.

Bertie had never had any of the moss in his hands before. His exclamations over the tiny red cups were sweet to

hear. Nelly thought the specimens Martin selected were even finer than the little fragment she had at home.

"And now you are not going, are you?" asked Bertie almost piteously, after Martin had replaced the ladder.

Nelly told him she had promised to return soon.

"But the boat!" put in Bertie. "I want you to try our new boat; and then, you know, you can get the lilies."

"Will your father be willing?" asked Martin. "If Mr. Wood will trust us, Nelly, perhaps we might spend a few moments more. Shall I ask him?"

Nelly looked very eager. The lilies were hardly to be resisted. Bertie did not wait for her answer, but skipped ahead of her, re-entered the mill, and was at the door again before they

were, calling out, as fast as he could speak, —

"Father says, 'Yes, certainly!' Here is the key of the padlock; and the oars are in the mill, and we can find them as we go through. So come, Nelly; and we'll get lilies!"

The children passed through the mill again; and Martin shouldered a pair of oars which Bertie designated as the right ones. Nelly left the basket of moss standing on a high bench in a corner.

The pond was one which fed the mill. It was not very large; but it looked attractive, nestled among groups of trees and high elderberry-bushes. Bertie marched first along the narrow path that led among these bushes to the boat, looking back now and then to see that

Martin and Nellie were not lost to him in its windings.

Martin pulled the boat to shore by its chain, and helped his companions to get in without wetting their feet. Little Bertie was a picture of sunny happiness, sitting beside Nelly, his plump hands folded in his lap. Martin rowed into the midst of the lilies; and each of them gathered as many as they wished. They were both plentiful and beautiful. Nelly made some into a wreath by hastily braiding the long stems; and Bertie was nothing loath to let her place it on his head. If he looked happy before, he was now radiant, his sweet and innocent face agreeing with the purity of the flowers. Nelly braided another chaplet to put about her hat.

The row on the pond lasted but a

short time. They returned to the mill, Nelly to take possession of the moss again, and Martin to leave the oars and the key. Mr. Wood was not in sight: so they bade Bertie good-by, and went home.

CHAPTER II.

BERTIE.

"WHAT a disorderly-looking place!" exclaimed Mr. Brooks, as he entered a portion of the barn where Martin was making nest-boxes for the chickens. "Here lies a pile of old boards; there are two useless barrels without bottoms; and how came this wheelbarrow here? As for that birch-broom, Martin, I think it will answer a better purpose if it is employed in sweeping out this litter of straw and hay, than it seems to be doing at present, lying in the door-way for people to trip over as they enter."

This was a severe rebuke for the

farmer to utter to Martin, who was generally careful and thrifty about his labor, and rarely merited any words of the kind. Martin colored deeply, and stood looking down at the hammer in his hand in painful confusion. He knew he deserved a reprimand, and therefore wisely accepted it. He did not stammer out, as some boys would have done under the circumstances, "I could not very well help it, sir," or, "I forgot," or, "I have been too busy," or, "I was just going to attend to it." He was, however, glad when Mr. Brooks asked the questions, —

"Who put the place in such confusion? Did you?"

"No, sir," answered he: "some of the men were working here this morning while I was at the mill; and they left it

so. They were called away shortly after I came in; and I promised them to put things to rights."

"And why did you not keep your promise?" asked the farmer.

"I had begun the nest-boxes, sir; and I was so interested, I did not much like to stop. I knew all the time that I ought to, of course."

"The case," said the farmer, "is not quite as bad as it seemed at first sight. I prefer, however, that you put aside the boxes until order is restored. I do not like my barn to be in such a condition for an unnecessary half-hour. 'A place for every thing, and every thing in its place,' is the motto of the farm."

Mr. Brooks stepped over the birch-broom, and went into the cow-yard, leaving Martin to begin his performances at

once, which he did by gathering together his tools, and laying the boxes, completed and uncompleted, in a heap by themselves. He looked about to see what he should do next. He picked up the broom, that it might at least be out of the way, and loaded the wheelbarrow with the boards and barrels. Martin disliked disorder himself, although the morning's experience apparently proved to the contrary; and, as by degrees the barn assumed its usual aspect, he felt a genuine satisfaction at the restoration. His meditations at first were not of a cheerful character; but presently he whistled over his work with his ordinary patience and good-humor. He had the broom in his hands, finishing drawing the litter together, when he

heard a small, piping voice in the doorway say timidly, —

"Martin, Martin!"

He looked up, and beheld little Bertie Wood standing looking at him smilingly, but somewhat ruefully too.

"Bertie!" exclaimed Martin, "is that you?"

"Yes," answered Bertie, "it's me. I thought I would come and spend the afternoon with you."

"Why, how did you get here?" asked Martin. "Did your father bring you?"

"Oh! I walked," replied Bertie. "It is not very far from my house to your house, you know."

"I should say it is pretty far for you, Bertie," said Martin, with an inward suspicion of his young visitor. "Don't you feel tired?"

"Yes," answered the child: "I guess I'll sit down on one of these boxes, and look at you sweep;" and he took a seat on a nest.

"Where is your hat?" asked Martin, seeing that he wore none, and that some locks of his soft silky hair had strayed over his eyes.

"I lost it on the way," said Bertie with a sigh, evidently at the recollection. "It blew off."

"Why didn't you run after it?" asked Martin.

"I did," said Bertie promptly; "but you see it rolled into a field where there were a cow and a calf; and, whenever I thought I had it, the calf butted about *so* that I had to let it go."

"I expect you have had rather a hard time, then, in getting here," said Martin.

"Well, yes," said Bertie, "pretty hard; but I didn't mind it much."

"Bertie," said Martin, "I'm afraid you have run away."

Bertie looked steadily out of the door, as though he did not hear the remark.

"What will your mother say when she misses you?"

"Oh! she has the baby to keep her company," said Bertie: "she will not mind my being gone."

"When did you start?" asked Martin.

"Soon after you and Nelly went away. I felt lonesome for you."

"Then you have not had any dinner?"

"I don't know," answered Bertie. "Yes I do, too: I remember, now, that the dinner-bell had not rung."

"O Bertie, Bertie! how badly your

father and mother must have felt when you did not come to the table as usual! They are looking for you all this time, I'm sure."

Poor Bertie broke into tears, saying, —

"I thought you would be glad to see me; and you are not glad at all. I lost my way too, and walked on a wrong road, till a man told me you lived here."

"I *am* glad to see you," said Martin soothingly; "but I cannot be glad that you have run away."

"I haven't run away *much*, — only a little," said Bertie brokenly.

"I think you have run away plenty for to-day," said Martin.

"Yes," assented Bertie.

Martin saw that the child must be returned to his parents without delay, on

account of their alarm; and, as a step towards this, he decided to take him into the house, and lay the case before Mrs. Brooks. He knew Bertie would probably receive at home a sufficient allowance of moral lesson on his fault; so, seeing how exhausted the little fellow was, he made no further comment on the subject.

"Now that I have finished my sweeping," said he, "I am going into the house. Will you go too, and see Nelly?"

Bertie smiled through his tears, and took Martin's offered hand with an air of humble affection.

The story was told to Mrs. Brooks in a few private words. She said the little child must, in the first place, be provided with some dinner; and, in the second place, Martin ought to go back to the

mill with the tidings. She received Bertie with great kindness, kissed his rosy cheeks still wet with weeping, and took him in the kitchen herself, and settled him at the table to a comfortable meal. But Bertie now experienced the consequences of his rambling walk to such a degree, that he could scarcely eat. He was evidently very weary, and from time to time nodded sleepily over his plate. He seemed to be conscious of this, and, with sturdy dignity, tried to prop his head on one hand, while he fed himself with the other. Alas for Bertie! this only helped the matter in a way opposed to his design. In five minutes more, he dropped into a heavy slumber; and Comfort, the cook, carried him up stairs, and deposited him gently in bed.

When Martin had gone but a brief

distance on the road to the mill, he met the miller himself, hurrying anxiously along on horseback. Seeing Martin, he stopped his horse, and asked if he knew where Bertie was. Martin told the whole story. Mr. Wood's relief was intense when he found that his child was safe.

"I have not seen him," said he, "since you started for the pond this morning. At first, we did not know what to think, — whether an accident had happened, or that you had taken him home with you."

"I would not have done that without getting your consent," said Martin. "I brought back the oars and the key. Did you see them?"

"Yes," answered the miller; "and I found the boat all right too; and that made me think nothing had happened

while you were on the water. I got out my horse, and rode here as fast as possible to ask what you knew of the matter. Bertie never did so before: it is a queer trick for him."

"I was on the way to your house, sir," stated Martin.

After some further talk, the miller said he would go on, and take Bertie home with him on the horse.

"But he is fast asleep," said Martin.

"That is not of much consequence," returned Mr. Wood. "I must wake him. I cannot come up this way again to-day.'

When he reached the farm-house, however, Mr. Brooks, having heard the story of the little worn-out runaway, begged that he might not be disturbed.

"I am going past the mill myself this

afternoon," said he; "and I will bring Bertie comfortably home in my wagon, after he has finished his nap."

Mrs. Brooks, too, considered that it would be cruel to take him from his needed rest. The miller yielded to these kind persuasions, and rode home without the truant.

When Bertie awoke, he was in a fretful state of mind. His sleep had not rested him: it had been too heavy for that. He was feverish and sorrowful. But Mrs. Brooks knew a remedy for all this; and that was, to undress her little charge, and give him a quiet, cooling bath. The day was so warm, that a bath would have been a luxury for any one: to Bertie it was both a luxury and a medicine; and he came out of it re-

freshed, buoyant, and restored to good humor.

When told that he was to remain for a considerable part of the afternoon, he showed a joyful satisfaction; but, on being informed that his father had visited the farm-house during his sleep, he became somewhat downcast.

"What did he say?" he asked Nelly, who was the one who communicated the news.

"He was very glad to find you were safe," answered Nelly. "He was afraid something had happened to you."

"Oh, no! nothing happened to me," said Bertie. "You see I was *so careful*, I would not even let that calf butt me when I was looking for my hat."

"How far from here did you lose your

hat?" asked Nelly, smiling at this child-like remark.

"Not so very far. It was a nice little calf, if it did butt around. I wish father had one just like it. I'd soon teach it to be good, and eat salt out of my hand."

"Do you think you could find the field again?" inquired Nelly.

"Of course!" answered Bertie. "As soon as I saw the calf, I should know it was the field."

"Then," said Nelly, "I think you and I had better go look for your hat."

Bertie thought this a good plan, and burst into merriment when Nelly put on his head a cloth cap belonging to Martin, that made him look like a little old man. They set out in quest of the field, walking slowly on Bertie's account, and also to avoid getting heated.

Nelly found it rather a difficult matter to locate the field, Bertie's description of its whereabouts was so uncertain. They turned down this lane, and up that road, and inquired of the passers for a pasture-lot containing a cow and a calf, but without the desired success. At last, when Nelly had given up the search in the fear of fatiguing Bertie too much, and they were returning leisurely, hand in hand, Bertie broke away from her, ran to the fence, and, looking through its bars, declared they were now passing the very spot.

"But where is the calf?" asked Nelly, stepping to the fence, and examining the prospect.

"There it is!" asserted Bertie, pointing. "Do not you see it?"

"No," replied Nelly: "there is no calf here, that I can find."

"There is my hat, any way!" said Bertie; and he crept through the bars after it, first giving a cautious glance towards a cow and a sheep grazing in the extremity of the lot.

Nelly saw that the hat was indeed there; and she was as glad as Bertie himself at its recovery. He removed the cap, and placed it on his head in triumph.

"That is a cow," said Nelly; "but what you thought was a calf, Bertie, is an old brown sheep. No wonder you say it butted around!"

"Isn't it a calf?" asked Bertie. Then, being convinced of his mistake, he gave a whoop of amusement. "I was in such a hurry after the hat," he said in a tone

of apology, "that I did not see very straight, I suppose; and then I was frightened too. Besides, nobody keeps sheep down our way; and I forgot the looks of 'em!"

After they returned to the house, Nelly took Bertie in the kitchen to get a drink of cold water. Remembering of how little dinner the child had been able to partake, Comfort offered him a slice of bread and butter. He accepted it almost eagerly, and sat down in the doorway that opened to the garden while he was eating. Comfort watched the young runaway with a secret enjoyment, which the staid face she wore could hardly conceal. Her aspect was very much like that of a good old cat as she surveys the gambols of her kittens; a close observer being able to detect both hidden

love and tender solicitude in the very dignity and grave indifference with which Mistress Puss feels it necessary to regard the uneeremonious family who roll and tumble about her, some of them even frisking with her tail, or zealously nibbling at her ears.

As soon as he had finished his bread, Bertie gave Nelly some mild hints that he would like a little of Martin's society. He asked where Martin was; wanted to know if he were very busy, and what kind of work he was doing; till Nelly, seeing which way the wind was setting, proposed that they should go and seek him.

"He will be real glad I've found my hat, I'm sure!" said Bertie, jumping up from the door-sill, and seizing it from the chair where he had laid it.

Martin was in the barn, in the very place where Bertie had found him on his arrival. He was sorting potatoes from a great pile on the floor, which had been brought in and put there for the purpose since Bertie and he went to the house together. Martin had two barrels standing near. The small potatoes he put in one, and the large in the other. Bertie watched the progress of the work with interest. Nelly arranged him a comfortable seat, and then left him, as she, too, had duties which demanded her attention.

"I found my hat!" said Bertie suddenly.

"So I see," remarked Martin. "It is a good hat; and it would have been a pity to lose it. What did you do with the crown Nelly made for you? did you lose that too?"

"Oh, no!" answered Bertie. "There was a little girl along the road asked me for it; and I gave it to her. She said it was very pretty. I was getting tired of carrying my hat in my hands, so I didn't mind giving it away. I would like to help sort potatoes, if you will let me, Martin."

"Of course I'll let you!" said Martin. "It will be quite a fine thing to have you help me. You must be careful, however, and put each potato where it belongs."

"Yes," said Bertie.

"The large ones are to go in this barrel, and the small ones in that: now, will you remember?"

"Yes: I'll do it just as you do," answered Bertie, proud to be allowed to assist. He labored industriously till the

two barrels were filled. Martin rolled them aside, and, procuring others, continued sorting from the heap.

"I believe I am too tired to do any more," said Bertie; and indeed the little fellow's face told the same story.

"I'll get a large armful of hay, and make a place for you to rest," said Martin kindly. "I am sorry I let you work at all." He brought in the hay, and, disposing it in a corner, advised Bertie to lie down upon it, and make himself as cool and comfortable as he could under the circumstances.

"Martin," said Bertie, as, accordingly, he took a half-sitting, half-lying posture on the hay, "why don't you be a miller, and not a farm-boy? It is a great deal pleasanter, I can tell you. If you were a miller, you would not need to sort pota-

toes, and get your fingers covered with this brown dust. Just look at mine!" He held up a pair of diminutive hands, that were certainly in want of soap and water.

"If I were a miller," rejoined Martin, "I should get not only my hands, but my face and neck too, full of *meal*."

"I know that," returned Bertie thoughtfully; "but you see flour is clean, and this dust is not."

"I do not believe I should feel much difference," said Martin. "The skin is full of little pores, Bertie; some of them so small they cannot be seen with the eye. Any kind of dust, white like flour, or dark like the earth that is on these potatoes, does harm to us if it gets in these pores."

Bertie chose out a clean spot on his wrist, and gazed at it intently.

"What are pores for, Martin?"

"We perspire through them. If they are stopped up, we cannot perspire well; and that is not good for the health."

"Then I'll go and wash my hands in that place where the cows drink," said Bertie; and he rose, and wandered off to a tank of water in the barn-yard. He was absent so long, that Martin went to look for him, but found that, after having cleaned his hands, he had put himself to no worse occupation than that of sailing chips.

"Where is Bertie?" demanded Mr. Brooks, entering the barn. "I am going to harness the horse, and take him home."

Martin went to the door, and called the child from his play.

"You have cleared away that rubbish in a thorough, satisfactory manner," continued the farmer, looking about approvingly. "Now you see, Martin, how necessary it is to be prompt in action: had any thing happened to delay the removal of those things much longer, great would have been the confusion on the arrival of the potatoes; and here they had to come, as it was the most convenient spot. — Well, Bertie," as the small, sunny face peered in at the door, "are you ready to start for home, my man? I am going to get ready a horse and wagon; and then you and I will take a nice little drive to the mill."

CHAPTER III.

"THURSDAY, THE FIFTEENTH."

As fast as Martin filled the barrels, he moved them away, until a row stood against the barn-wall, piled with potatoes.

He was still busy when the farmer returned. Martin heard him speaking to his horse outside, as he unharnessed him. He longed to go and ask how Bertie behaved, and what he said on reaching his home; but he concluded that it was not worth while to leave his work, and that he should probably hear a full account at a more favorable time, — at the tea-table that very night,

perhaps. Mr. Brooks disposed of his horse, and in a thoughtful, abstracted manner passed through the division of the barn where Martin was at work, to another which opened into it. He scarcely seemed to notice Martin, who conjectured that the business errand, from which he had just returned, was still engrossing his mind. When Mr. Brooks re-entered, however, on his way out, he stopped, seemed to remember something, fumbled in his pocket, and, taking thence a folded scrap of paper, handed it to Martin, saying, —

"Mr. Wood told me to give you that," and walked into the barn-yard.

Martin unfolded the paper, and read these words: "Thursday, the fifteenth." He turned the scrap over for something further, but that was all.

"What do I know about the fifteenth?" he asked himself in perplexity: "this is a mistake, I suppose. Perhaps Mr. Wood intended to send me a note, and this paper was accidentally substituted. It is his handwriting certainly; and that letter T has just the flourish which he gives to many capitals. I'll ask Mr. Brooks if he knows what 'Thursday, the fifteenth,' signifies."

He carried the paper to the farmer, and said,—

"I do not know what Mr. Wood means, sir. This is all it says on the paper: 'Thursday, the fifteenth.'"

Mr. Brooks took the scrap, glanced at it, and remarked,—

"I conjectured it was a note, or else I should have explained. Let me see: when is the fifteenth?"

"The day but one after to-morrow, I think, sir."

"Well, Mr. Wood is going to be absent from home on that night; and he asked me to allow you to come down there, as his wife will feel safer than if left alone with the children."

"I should not be a great deal of protection," said Martin with a smile.

"Well, in this quiet neighborhood, not much protection is necessary," rejoined Mr. Brooks. "I told Mr. Wood you could go, of course; and then he wrote this. I suppose he thought the date might pass out of my mind; and, full as it is of other matters at present, it is very likely it might."

Bertie seemed very glad to get home again. His mother came to meet him at the door, with the baby in her arms; and

he ran to them, and kissed them both as heartily as if he had been gone a month.

Martin had the prospect of plenty of work before him for at least a week. Day after day, as fast as he sorted the potatoes, more were brought in. The pile scarcely had an opportunity to appear diminished. The barrels were carried away when filled, and carted down to the river, where they were received on board a sloop.

Martin found his labor fatiguing and monotonous; and he was relieved when Mr. Brooks took him from it one morning, and, putting some one else in his place, allowed him to do the carting to the sloop.

He was not strong enough to accomplish the lifting at each end of the route without assistance; and, even with assist-

ance, he had to exert himself considerably. He was still tired when night came; yet it was not the dull, dreary feeling he had experienced from his former work. It was after a day of such labor as this that he set out to go to the mill, according to engagement. The walk was almost more than he could bear in addition to what he had already gone through. When he reached the mill, he would have been thankful to go to bed at once; but it was yet so early, the sun being still up, that he was ashamed to tell kind-hearted Mrs. Wood how tired he really was. The miller had not yet started on his journey. Martin found him seated under a grape-arbor at the rear of the house, which was near the mill, and was a very pretty, graceful structure, small, but well built, and vying

with the mill in its picturesque situation.

"I have had a hard day's work," said the miller; "and I am taking a bit of rest before I start. I am going on horseback too; and that is not an easy way of travelling. Sit down, Martin, my boy, and rest with me. Is not this grape-arbor pleasant? I planted the vines myself."

"And they are full of fine grapes too," said Martin, taking the proffered bench: "they look as if they would soon be ripe. How large they are! and what blue, misty cheeks they are getting! What is the name of the vines, Mr. Wood?"

Mr. Wood leaned back in his chair, and looked from Martin to the rich bunches of fruit with a satisfied air.

"Well," said he, "it is hard to tell what the name of the vines is, Martin. I cannot find any good enough. My wife and I have changed it many times. We are so much attached to the vines, and have had such constant happiness watching them growing to their present perfection, that we feel they ought to have a right nice name. No money could buy that principal vine from us, any more than it could buy our little Bertie there."

"Papa," put forth Bertie, who was amusing himself rolling on the grass, "why couldn't money buy me? Mother told me the other afternoon, when I ran away, that I was not good for much."

His father scarcely seemed to hear

him; and Bertie laughed over his child-like conceit unobserved.

"But had not the vines a name, originally, Mr. Wood?" asked Martin.

"Originally!" repeated the miller. "I planted the seed myself: so, you see, they have no right to any name but what we choose to give them. A seed of a grape starts a new variety."

"Yes," replied Martin; "I know that: but I did not understand you had raised this from the seed. It must be a great many years ago since this main vine was a seed. It is very large around where it springs from the earth. It is a long time to wait, isn't it, Mr. Wood, for a seedling to come into bearing?"

"Yes," replied the miller; "it is a rather long time. But then, to me, it is very

interesting to watch and take care of growing things. I get to love them like children. It is sixteen years ago last fall since I planted the seed of that vine."

"Did you plant it in the ground, sir?" inquired Martin. "I should like to know all about it, as we have some very fine Catawba grapes ripening; and I should take interest in making some experiments with their seeds."

"No: I did not plant it in the ground. It was autumn, and I set it in a flower-pot. I kept the pot in a sunny window, in a room where we had a small fire, — not a hot one, take notice; for that is not favorable to growth."

"What was the name of the variety from which you took the seed?" inquired Martin.

"The Isabella," answered the miller; "and they were as fine and delicious specimens of the kind as I have ever seen. I'll tell you all about it. Come, bring your chair nearer mine: I don't think it's cosey to talk to folks at a distance."

Martin obeyed, feeling warmed and grateful for the heartiness and kindness which the miller displayed towards him, boy of fifteen as he was.

"Just sixteen years ago this autumn," went on Mr. Wood, "my wife and I were married. She was a good girl; and we had an affection for each other, which I shouldn't wonder if folks said had kept on increasing to this time. Well, the day we were married, I brought her home to this house to live. It was not as nice as it is now. I have added to it,

and made it more convenient. The mill was here, just as you see it now; and I was the miller, and had been for about six months, — long enough to get established, and acquire a run of custom sufficient to support my wife and myself, without either of us feeling the want of any thing we really needed for our comfort. There were some neighbors lived here then (they have moved out West since), who took an interest in me; and, while I was gone to be married, they pried open one of those back windows you see there, and entered the house, and secretly spread out as nice a feast as anybody need want even on a wedding-day. They carried our little kitchen-table — the only one in the house — into our parlor, and covered it with a linen cloth as white as

snow. Then they put on it a pair of roasted chickens, fat and tender; a tall glass dish of yellow, crisp celery; two sparkling forms of jelly,— one of black currant, the other of red; a loaf of home-made bread; a plate of butter that smelled like June roses; and a large cake. In the centre of all stood a fancy basket, heaped into the form of a pyramid, with magnificent clusters of Isabella grapes. You may imagine how surprised I was, when, in the course of the same afternoon, I brought my wife home. It was a neighborly welcome, you see, and all the more acceptable because every thing was either of family growth or manufacture. I had made my own humble arrangements for the commencement of housekeeping, as the kitchen pantry testified; but I had not

been able to afford any thing on such a scale as this. It happened that my wife had been too sad at leaving her home and her parents to eat any thing: she had not so much as tasted our wedding-cake; and, when she reached here, she was faint. The feast of good things she found awaiting her was just what she needed; and the surprise made her stop thinking of her old home, at least for the time. The day had unexpectedly turned chilly. As there was no fire burning, I commenced building one; and then my wife searched out the materials for making coffee. When the coffee was ready, we sat down to the table, and had a pleasant, quiet time. I do not think I shall forget it if I live till I am eighty years old. My wife brightened up amazingly, and we were right cheerful and

merry. It was she who proposed planting some of the grape-seeds; 'for,' said she, 'we ought to do something to keep up the remembrance of the kindness of our neighbors.' I thought the idea a first-rate one; and the next day I prepared the flower-pots. I wanted to get the vines ahead in-doors during the cold weather. When the spring was far enough advanced, I intended to set them in the open air."

"What sort of earth did you use?" asked Martin: "what soil is best for seedlings?"

"I don't know," returned the miller, "what is best for them; but I followed a plan of my own, that I thought might succeed. I went to some woods back of our pond, and brought home a basket of leaf mould; and this I mixed with

enough earth to make it about what I thought right. I wanted to follow Nature as much as possible; and decayed leaves, the produce of past seasons, is the nourishment Nature gives to build her great forests. Our little seeds liked the nest I made them, and showed themselves above-ground in due time. My wife and I watched them unceasingly, and tended them from day to day with all the care we could bestow. Perhaps we took too much care of them: I think they were in danger of it between us both."

"When spring came, were they all doing well, sir?"

"Yes, pretty well; as much so as could be expected from their in-door life. I made ready little sheltered nooks here and there, in which I spaded more leaf

mould, and then planted the young vines in them. After about five years, we were gratified to find our vines blossoming, and setting for fruit. Now our interest redoubled. We could hardly wait for the autumn. When it arrived, we were disappointed to see that only one of the vines had brought its grapes to perfection: the others had dropped off gradually, or withered. The flavor of these grapes was good, but nothing remarkable; so much so, that my wife and I thought poorly of our success. However, a vine-raising neighbor told us not to be discouraged; that the merits of seedlings ought not to be pronounced upon until they had been a few seasons in bearing. The following winter proved a very severe one; and, when the spring arrived, I found that all our young vines

but one had been killed. The one that had been spared was the very vine which had fruited. It bore again that year. I took care to protect it from the cold of succeeding winters by binding it with straw. The more pains I bestowed upon it, the larger and finer became its fruit, season after season. I set out cuttings from it, and by and by trained them over this arbor: that largest vine is the seedling."

"Do the grapes taste much like the Isabella, Mr. Wood?"

"No: they are firmer and sweeter. When they are ripe, I want you to come and try them for yourself. I'll give you some cuttings, too, if you care for them; but you will have to wait sometime, as spring is the time for setting out cuttings."

"I do care very much indeed," said Martin; "and Mr. Brooks likes me to take an interest in raising fruit too."

"An experiment with seedlings should not be a mere pastime," said the miller. "I would not advise any one to plant grape-seeds, unless they are in earnest, and intend to give them proper care: even then, it is of doubtful advantage to increase the already long list of varieties. Good vines are always easy to be had by cuttings; and much time is thus saved over seedlings, of course. But," added the miller, looking at his watch, "I must stop talking, and get ready to start. Sit here and rest yourself, Martin. You will find it pleasanter than in-doors."

So saying, the miller entered his house. There was a wooden settee under the arbor; and on this Martin

stretched himself, glad of the opportunity. Pondering over the to him attractive theme of seedlings and cuttings, he fell asleep, his head resting on his arms, face downwards. He slept soundly, but not too soundly for dreams; for he fancied himself in a great vineyard of his own planting, and throughout it blue and white clusters hung ready to be gathered.

CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN ON GUARD.

Some one awoke Martin by shaking his arm. It was little Bertie, who laughed merrily to see how zealously he rubbed his eyes as he came to himself. The miller stood beside the settee too, clad for his journey. He had removed his usual whitened clothing, and now looked like anybody else in his Sunday suit of black.

"There, Bertie!" said he, "do not pull him so. He is awake: let him stay quiet. You must be tired, Martin. I expect you have been pretty busy today."

"Yes, sir," said Martin: "I have been carting potatoes, and I do not feel very bright."

"*More* potatoes, Martin?" asked Bertie.

"Come in, and take a cup of tea with me," said the miller, turning toward the house again. "That will rest you."

"I have had my tea, sir."

"Never mind: a little more will not be much out of place. I saw poached eggs and corn-cake on the table as I came out. My wife is famous for her corn-cake; and part of the secret is our fresh ground meal, I think."

Martin followed Mr. Wood, and took the place at the table more to please others than himself: although, as it proved, he was pleased; for the corn-

cake was good, and the tea did refresh him.

"I wish," said Bertie, nibbling at his piece of corn-cake, — "I wish that I was a miller. When I get large, I mean to be one; and I'll ask Martin to come and live with me all the time, and then we can go out on my mill-pond, and get lilies as often as we want them."

"If it were not so late," said his father, smiling, "you and Martin could go out on the pond now for a little while."

Tired as he was, Martin's eyes sparkled at the thought. The miller observed this, and said, turning to his wife, —

"*Is* it too late, Patty, for the boys to go? Is it safe on account of dampness?"

Mrs. Wood glanced out of the win-

dow, and, seeing the sun still shining, said she thought they might venture a short row. Bertie, at once all aglow, needed no further permission, but jumped down from his seat, and sought for his hat.

"Hurry, Martin!" said he, "or we shall not have time."

His mother gave him a piece of bread and butter to eat after he was seated in the boat, as he had not finished his tea, and to wait longer would put the row out of the question. Mr. Wood handed Martin the key of the mill, in order that he might get the oars; and Bertie ran ahead with the key of the boat's padlock. He was at the water's edge, trying to pull in the chain, when Martin arrived, bearing the oars on his shoulder. It was but a few moments more before

they were gliding from the shore, and passing from the shadow of the bank and the tall trees into the sunlight that lay on the centre of the water.

"Isn't this sweet?" said Bertie. "I ought to have been a fish, I love the water so."

"Fishes like to be *in* the water," said Martin; "and you like to be *on* it."

"I'd die if I was a fish, wouldn't I?" asked Bertie. "I'd choke so far down in the water."

"No," returned Martin, laughing: "if you were a fish, you would not die. You would swim around, and talk to the other little fishes, and enjoy yourself among the lilies as much as you had a mind. It is boys who choke under water."

"How do you know fishes talk?" said Bertie thoughtfully.

"I don't know that they make any sound, as we do," answered Martin; "but I am sure they must have some way of understanding each other."

"Why are you sure?" persisted Bertie, anxious in the pursuit of knowledge.

"I'll tell you why I am sure," said Martin, pausing on his oars, and, as he spoke, looking about him, and enjoying the placid sunset scene. "Often, when I have been fishing in our river, I have seen a fish nibble at my hook, get frightened at it, and swim off to other fishes that were moving in and out among the stones. In a minute, the whole of them would dart about as though they were dreadfully scared, and then they would all swim away; and I have some-

times fished the whole morning afterwards, and never had one bite."

"Wasn't that a wise fish to tell the rest!" cried Bertie, clapping his hands. "Birds talk, I know, because I can hear them. I have heard a mother-bird talk to the little ones in our wren-house when I have stood under it; and they cried out together in answer. After all, I guess it's pleasanter to be a bird than a fish: so I'd rather be a bird. O Martin! here we are by the lilies."

Martin kept the boat still while Bertie gathered his favorites; but, seeing that it was hardly safe for the little fellow to stoop far enough to reach them, he contrived to give an occasional paddle with one oar, and hastily plucked them himself with his other hand. Bertie was as well pleased to have them

picked for him as to pick them himself: in fact, he was not a child who was difficult to please under any circumstances. Very simple things were sources of happiness to him.

"What is this gold and red color I see down in the water, Martin?" asked he, looking over the edge of the boat. "There, now! the leaves are so thick, I do not see it. Oh! the water is growing deep again, and now I see it. Here is blue too; but the red is prettiest: all the way down to the sand, the water is full of red and gold and blue."

"It is the reflection of the sunset," explained Martin: "look up in the sky, Bertie, and you will find the same gold and red and blue in the clouds. They are growing brighter every moment; but

they will soon fade again, the night is so near."

Bertie examined the sky and the water alternately, evidently comparing the appearances.

"So it is the sunset," he said finally, in a tone of surprise at his lack of discernment. "I might have known it; for I have often seen the blue clouds, and the trees too, in the water. Good-by, father, good-by!"

He pronounced the last words as, through the bushes, he saw his father crossing the bridge, on horseback. He stood up in the boat shouting, and waving his hat.

"Good-by, boys!" returned the miller, leaving the bridge, and riding close to the bank: "it is time to go in now. I think you have been out long enough

"Good-by, father, good-by." p. 88.

for to-day. Be a good boy while I am gone, Bertie; and don't run away again after Martin when he goes home."

"No," said Bertie: "I'll stay, and take care of mother and the baby."

"I'll be back to-morrow, before dinner-time: let me hear a pleasant account of you when I do come. That is right, Martin: steer for shore."

"Bertie," said Martin, as he lifted out his little companion, and fastened the boat to the stake, — "Bertie, there is a small shell-fish, called the nautilus, that is supposed to lead just the life you seem to think pleasant. Did you ever hear of it?"

"No," replied Bertie: "I never heard of nautilus, Martin. What does he do? Tell me."

"He is said to sail on the water," was

the reply. "He uses his shell as a boat."

"What!" exclaimed Bertie. "I never heard of such a queer thing. Is it a pretty shell, Martin?"

"Very pretty," replied Martin, taking up the oars, and turning homeward. "He is sometimes called the paper-nautilus, because his shell is so thin and white. What made me think of him was your saying you ought to be a fish. We are told that little Mr. Nautilus lives both in the water and on it; rowing about on the surface, or diving below, as he feels inclined."

"Now," said Bertie, — "now, Martin! what made you say 'rowing'? How can any thing row that has not arms?"

"The nautilus has both arms and sails," said Martin; "and, if all is true

that we are informed about him, he is a great wonder."

"Well, *is* it true, Martin?" asked Bertie.

"His empty shell is often found, and we know he exists; but whether he performs all the feats folks say he does, is another affair."

"What does he look like?" asked Bertie. "What kind of oars has he?"

"He has eight arms," replied Martin; "and six of them taper gradually to a point, — three on each side of his pearly shell. With these he swims or rows. For sails he uses the remaining two arms. They are not like the others, but are very broad; and pretty good sails they seem to be too, for I have seen a picture of him."

"Then he can swim like a fish, or row

like a boy," said Bertie, apparently thinking deeply on the subject. "It sounds almost too nice to be true, Martin. I want to *see* nautilus, and I'll believe afterwards. There, now! while we have been talking of him, we forgot to lift the lilies out of the boat."

"I will go back and get them," said Martin; "but you had better run ahead home as fast as you can go. The air feels very damp."

Bertie scampered accordingly, and Martin went to get the lilies. As he was returning, bearing both them and the oars, he saw, amid the elderberry-bushes, a large bed of long, tufted, green moss. He concluded that this might be pretty to go with the lilies: he pulled up some, and by management carried all safely to the house. At sight of the lil-

ies, Bertie begged his mother for something in which to dispose them in water. Bertie's love of the lilies was genuine, as Martin perceived as he watched him sorting them carefully, and using only the tips of his little fingers, in the fear that a rough touch might do harm. His mother lent him a pair of vases; but Martin said he could show him how to make an arrangement on a dish in a more attractive form. Mrs. Wood was by no means unwilling to spare her vases the risk of being broken: she gave permission to the children to go to the pantry and help themselves to what was requisite. Martin selected a white oval meat-dish: he placed it on the table, and, putting water in it, helped Bertie settle it full of moss. Thus covered, it

was difficult to tell whether it were a dish, or a flat, long basket. The boys then broke the spotless lilies from their stems, and put them down the centre of the dish in the form of a cross. Bertie fairly hopped in his delight at the contrast thus afforded. At Martin's private suggestion, he carried the dish as a present to his mother, who rewarded him amply when she said, —

"It is beautiful, boys: I am sure it is a gift fit for a queen."

"And now, mother," said Bertie, "may Martin and I go up in the garret, and search for that bundle of slips of white paper that father gave me once, to make lamplighters? It will be so nice for us to sit in the kitchen and roll lamplighters till it is time to go to bed! It is real

good fun to make lamplighters, Martin: I know you will like it."

"There is Aunt Hannah opening our gate!" exclaimed his mother. "I hope she has not come to say that little Harry is worse, poor, dear boy! — Yes: run up stairs, if you like; but do not overturn things so that I cannot find them."

When the boys returned with the paper, they found that Aunt Hannah had gone, and Bertie's mother was putting on her hat and shawl. "The baby is asleep, Martin," said she; "and I feel that I must run over to Aunt Hannah's to see Harry for a few moments. She says he is worse: he has had another attack of croup. I shall not be gone long; and, meanwhile, you and Bertie can amuse yourselves over your paper lighters."

She finished getting ready, and was going out the door, when Martin said, in a voice of unconscious trepidation, —

"If the baby should wake, Mrs. Wood, what must I do to keep him from crying?"

Mrs. Wood laughed, and said she did not think that was likely to happen; but, if it did, Bertie must talk to the baby, and keep him interested as well as he could.

"He likes me to make eyes at him, — *so*," said Bertie; and he put on a comical aspect.

"Now, then," said Bertie, as his mother left them, "for the lighters. Or are you too tired, Martin?"

"I was tired," answered Martin; "but my little nap and the cup of tea rested me a great deal. Anyway, it will not

hurt me to make lamplighters. Let's draw up to this table, and spread out our papers, and have plenty of room."

"Well," said Bertie; "and you sit on one side of the table, and I will sit on the other. But I think it is getting rather dull-looking, and we ought to have a candle. Mother keeps candlesticks on a shelf in that pantry: if you will come, I'll show you, and you can get one down for us."

The candle was lit, and the lighter-making began in earnest. Bertie was quite an expert at it, and rolled them off with a rapidity which astonished his visitor, whose fingers, stiffened and toughened by hard labor, were less nimble at the task.

"Lamplighters," said Bertie, delivering an innocent little lecture on economy as

he worked, — "lamplighters are so handy, you see, Martin! It is good to have a vase full of them standing on the mantle-piece. It saves matches; and matches, you know, cost money. So it saves money. Lamplighters don't cost money, because any old paper will do to cut up for them."

"And lamplighters never fill a room with a choking smell," said Martin, "like matches do."

Bertie rolled the lighters so fast when he began, that presently, when he flagged a little, it was the more noticeable. It was evident that he was sleepy, and that bedtime was at hand. Once or twice he nodded, but caught himself half-way, and went on rolling diligently. Martin wished that Mrs. Wood would come. An hour passed,

and then Bertie's eyelids grew so heavy, he could scarcely keep them open longer.

"I think," said he, slowly getting down from the table, "that it is time for little boys to be in bed." Martin was about to offer his assistance, when fortunately Mrs. Wood returned. She said she had staid longer than she intended, as Harry was a great deal worse, and her help had been needed. As soon as she had settled things for the night, she had promised to go back again for a few hours.

"I do not want you to sit up, or wait for me, Martin," she said: "you and Bertie can go quietly to sleep; and I will take the key of the back door with me, to let myself in. I will return just as soon as I can."

"The baby has not made a sound

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while you have been gone," said Martin.

"I thought he would not," returned Mrs. Wood. "He usually sleeps from the hour I put him in his crib till five o'clock the next morning; and, as that is my getting-up time, it is all right. I am sorry to have to leave you, Martin; it does not seem kind: but Harry is so sick, I feel it my duty to go, particularly as Aunt Hannah is so distressed, she does not know what she is doing half the time. She is just as likely as not to give him the wrong medicine. Come, Bertie: mother will go up-stairs with you now."

Martin assured Mrs. Wood, that, so far from finding fault with being left alone, he was glad to be of use.

"If there is any thing I can do to help

you, Mrs. Wood, before you go, I hope," added he, "that you will tell me."

Mrs. Wood said there was no duty for the night left undone but that she must do herself; and, pointing out the room where he was to sleep, she led Bertie, nodding and stumbling, into her own, where, in his solitary crib, the eighteen-months-old baby already lay peacefully slumbering.

Martin sank to rest almost immediately. He intended to keep awake till Mrs. Wood returned; but exhausted Nature took her way. When the sound of Bertie's voice in the adjoining apartment aroused him to consciousness again, he was astonished to find that he had been sleeping.

"I meant to keep watch," said he; "and I have been asleep I do not know

how long. I wonder if Mrs. Wood has come back yet from her aunt's house. What can Bertie be saying in there? Perhaps he is talking in his dreams."

But Bertie's voice now took such a positive tone, that this supposition was not long entertained.

"O baby!" said he, "do lie still, can't you? If you kick off the blanket, you will catch a cold."

"I do not believe Bertie's mother is home," thought Martin, "or else he would not be talking to the baby. There is a lamp burning in there: I can see a dim light from it in the hall. Perhaps she left it burning on purpose."

"Now turn right over and go to sleep," continued Bertie; "and then mother will be pleased when she comes."

The mention of the word "mother" had an unfortunate effect. Whether he had missed her before, or not, the baby began now to repeat over and over again, "Mamma, mamma!"

"Mamma is coming, I tell you!" cried Bertie in an impatient manner: "so keep the blanket on your feet, *do!* I cannot be getting out of bed all the time to tuck them in."

Probably Bertie gave the blanket an impatient twitch to match his voice; for the baby whimpered, and called for mamma loudly.

Martin dressed himself quickly, and went in the room. The child stopped crying on his entrance, and looked at him in bewilderment.

"O Martin!" said poor Bertie, evidently relieved, "is that you? I did not like to

wake you: I have been having *such* a time!"

He was standing beside the crib, barefooted, and in his little night-dress; his short hair bristling about his head, owing to its late contact with his pillow. "The baby woke up, and he has been full of play this ever so long; sometimes kicking his blanket off, and sometimes throwing it over the side of the crib or on the floor. I expect that lamp mother left burning outside the door woke him: now he has been crying for mother to come back."

"Well, never mind," said Martin soothingly, and with difficulty suppressing a smile: "run and jump into bed again, and I'll look after the baby."

"I don't believe he'll let you," said Bertie disconsolately. "Mother put me

to sleep in her bed to-night. I *do* wish she would come!"

He crept under the coverings of a large bedstead, beside which stood the crib: approaching it, Martin commenced trying to get into the good graces of its occupant. The child continued to eye him in a bewildered way. He repulsed the hand with which Martin attempted to settle his pillow, accompanying the action with renewed cries for mamma. Baby-tending was new to Martin: he did not know what to do. He taxed his memory for some device by which to calm this wide-awake young gentleman into slumber again. The readiest method seemed to be story-telling. The difficulty was to obtain a hearing, several attempts that he made being completely drowned. At last, a wonderful account of a dog and a kit-

ten, whose adventures he invented for the purpose, caught the poor little creature's attention. While telling it, Martin quietly, and by degrees, replaced the blanket, and coaxed him to lie down. And now, if he paused for a moment, the baby fretted, and broke in with, "More tory, more tory!" till he found that he must keep straight on, trusting to the drone of his voice to bring on sleep: it had already done so for Bertie; so he was encouraged to hope for further success. He repeated all the jingling nursery rhymes he could recall, and told story after story, till his imagination flagged in supplying him with material: still that pair of eyes remained fixed on him, obstinately wide awake, and still the baby voice cried, "More, more!"

He tried singing, trusting that that

would do what the story-telling failed to accomplish. The baby did not like this arrangement, and gave such indications of breaking into tears, that he was glad to return to the first plan. The time seemed very long; and he waited anxiously for a clock to strike, which he heard ticking in the hall. He was surprised when it sounded two: he had no idea it was so late. He concluded that, as Mrs. Wood had found it necessary to stay thus far towards morning, she would not probably return before daylight. This thought nerved him to another effort to get the baby asleep. He wrapped the little fellow in his blanket, and, taking him in his arms, walked up and down the room. This pleased him; but it did not have the desired effect. As Martin became tired,

he attempted to restore the child to the crib; but he found that this was not to be done: he screamed, and clung closely to him, and, by pretty signs and broken words, indicated that he wanted a continuation of the walk, which Martin resumed accordingly. He tried again and again to get the little fellow to give up the idea; but all his experiments met with the same opposition. If he had wished for Mrs. Wood to come before, he wished so now with considerable more earnestness. Once, thoroughly fatigued, he laid the baby down, determined to let him cry his cry out; but his screams became so violent, and lasted so long, that, moved by pity, and afraid of sending him into some sort of fit, he raised him again, and returned to his dreary exercise, glad of any means of calming such

a state of excitement. Another hour passed, and still no help arrived. Poor Martin compared himself to a besieged castle awaiting re-enforcements. Shortly after four o'clock, Mrs. Wood returned. She was full of grief, having left Harry in a state from which the doctor said he could scarcely recover. She found Martin hard at work, and, as might be expected, overjoyed at her appearance, — a joy which was shared by her baby, who jumped and crowed in Martin's arms as she entered the apartment.

Martin thought it too late to go to bed again; but Mrs. Wood insisted that he should do so, promising, as he wanted to resume early work at the farm, to wake him in an hour's time, which she did accordingly.

At half-past five, immediately after breakfasting, Martin set out for home, not at all sorry that "Thursday, the fifteenth," had come and gone.

CHAPTER V.

A PRESENT.

A FEW days after this, as Martin was busy mending a gate that opened on the road, the miller drove up in a light wagon.

"Well, Martin," said he, "that was a pretty hard time you had at our house, wasn't it? I am sure I never expected to put you to any such a trial; nor did my wife, either. We are both of us much obliged to you, I can tell you."

"And you are quite welcome, Mr. Wood," returned Martin, taking off his hat respectfully.

"Are you much engaged this morning?" asked the miller.

"Yes, sir," answered Martin: "I have this gate to put to rights, and all that piece of fence yonder too."

"You don't think you could be spared, eh?"

"Not very well, sir."

"I thought to get you to go with me to the sale of Mr. Myer's horses. I want to buy one of them if I can. It is a pleasant ride over there."

"I know it, sir," said Martin rather wistfully, "especially by the mountain-road."

The miller got out of his wagon, and stood talking to Martin about the repairs he was making to the gate; and then, lifting out a basket of crab-apples which he said his wife had sent as a present to Mrs. Brooks, he walked towards the farm-house. Martin went on with his

work, keeping watch over the horse, which stood the very picture of patience, quietly brushing the flies from his sides. As the miller returned along the path from the house, he called out, —

"Run get your coat, Martin! Mr. Brooks told me you can go. He says the gate can wait till to-morrow."

Martin needed no second bidding, and, catching up his tools, ran in to make himself more presentable.

It was early autumn, and certainly no finer day for a drive could have been chosen. The auction was to take place some five miles distant. The mountain-road of which Martin spoke was rather the longest route; but the miller, from some motive of his own, selected it. The weather was still so warm, that

the shade of this road proved very agreeable. In some spots, the trees on each side mingled their branches in an arch. It was a rough road, it is true; but Mr. Wood was such a careful, skilful driver, that he managed to avoid many of the stones and ruts, and passed over the rest with as little jolt as possible. This road gradually ascended for the first two miles, and, after that, descended again. Near the top of the mountain, and at the end of the two miles, they came within view of a small lake, where Martin had often gone fishing. He looked at it admiringly as it lay nestled among the trees, and pointed out to Mr. Wood a soft white mist that hung over it.

"I should not like to live in the neighborhood of a lake, pretty as it is," said

Mr. Wood; "for a mist like that is said to bring sickness."

"How strange it is," said Martin, "to find a body of water on the top of a mountain! I should think it would drain into the low lands."

"It is a frequent thing to find lakes in high country," said the miller: "the hills are like sponges, and absorb the water. There is a stream somewhere about here, that runs from that lake down towards our neighborhood. I believe, however, that there is no brook of any account that leads *into* the lake: its sources are down where we can see nothing of them, — a mystery of Nature."

"Sometimes," said Martin, smiling, "I have envied the hermits that I read of in stories, because they can see so much of Nature in all her forms. I'd like to

have a cave or a hut on a mountain-side."

"You would not like it long," returned the miller, "or I am much mistaken. You would be in a great hurry to get back again where you could hear the sound of human voices."

"I'd have animals like Robinson Crusoe had," said Martin; "and they would keep me from feeling lonely. I like animals. I'd have a horse that I could take long rides upon, and pet, and teach knowing ways; and I'd have a dog, and a flock of sheep. The dog and the horse I should love the best, I think, because they would be more like companions."

"I don't wonder the thought pleases you," said the miller. "There is a romance about it that is bewitching to most boys; but the reality would proba-

bly startle them a little, could they once occupy a position like that of Robinson Crusoe, and undergo all his solitude and privations."

"Oh! I don't want to be Robinson Crusoe on an island," said Martin: "that is a little too much. I should be content to be a hermit on mainland, able, at any moment, to quit my cave, and go into the world again."

"Ah, ha!" laughed the miller. "I see it is just as I said: you would soon have enough. Here, before you even turn hermit, you are speculating on returning to live with human beings again. I think you would prefer joining the Gypsies, for my part."

"No," said Martin. "I used to think so; but they are such thieves, and have

so many dirty habits, that a regular Gypsy has now no attraction for me."

"You could set up for an irregular one then," said the miller, hastening his horse's speed, "and show your companions some of the benefits resulting from combined honesty, and soap and water."

"I'd rather be a farm-boy as I am," said Martin.

"Well, I should think you would," said the miller, "and bless your good fortune besides. You have a pleasant home and kind friends, and enough work to do to keep you contented and happy, but no more than your strength allows. Comfortably as you are situated, however, I believe you could scarcely meet many Gypsies in all Europe willing to change places with you."

"Why not?" asked Martin. "I should

think they would sometimes have longings for civilized life, the same as we have for their wild one."

"As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined," said the miller: "they would most likely cling to their roving ways, and shun honesty, and soap and water."

"There is an old saying," remarked Martin, "that it takes all kinds of people to make the world."

"It takes too many kinds, in my opinion," said the miller. "There are too many of the indifferent sorts, let alone the samples of the absolutely bad. I wish the number could be reduced. I don't like but one kind of person, myself."

"What kind is that, Mr. Wood?"

"The good kind," said the miller. "Heyday, pony! that was a hard jolt, wasn't it?"

"I am afraid," Martin ventured to say after they recovered from the jolt, — "I am afraid, Mr. Wood, that, if the kinds of people were reduced to the good, there would be only a few folks left in the world."

"Yes," said the miller: "they would be found here and there, I suppose, suddenly reduced to living alone, like our friend Robinson Crusoe. But that is not exactly the way I want to manage affairs, however. I don't want to dispense with the bad folks altogether, you see. I only want to dispense with them as bad folks. I want them to reform."

"How strange it is," said Martin, "that most people dislike even to hear of reforms! They want to jog along in their old ways, undisturbed."

"A man who is a professed reformer is

generally possessed of many enemies," said the miller. "The deeper the reform is, the harder is the fight against it, as a usual thing. It is the old story of selfishness. The more a man loves himself, the less he wants to hear of reform; and the less a man loves himself, the more he pants and glows to help his fellows, and lift them out of ignorance and darkness into light."

"I had such a curious thought come to me just now!" said Martin. "I wondered whether self-love is always an evil love; whether sometimes we cannot justly love the good in ourselves."

"Certainly we can," returned the miller; "but there is a broad line between the good and the evil love of self. When we do a kind action, the happiness, the gentle approbation of self,

which we feel over it, results from no evil love. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' is a proverb that illustrates this. The joy a man of generous nature has in liberality is a pure joy: he loves the good in himself unconsciously. Now we are coming to such a steep hill, Martin, we had better jump out, and try a little walking. It will benefit us, and ease our horse too."

Martin sprang out with alacrity; and the conversation was thus interrupted by a hasty walk, that left the two travellers rather breathless at its conclusion. They stopped a few moments at the hill-top to admire the view and rest the horse, and resumed their seats in the wagon, to drive on rapidly towards their destination; the roughnesses of the way being pretty well over.

Mr. Myer's house was not now far distant. It was evident, from the number of people they saw driving or walking along the roads, that some unusual thing was about to take place. Farmers passed with their wives or daughters, some of them dressed in Sunday attire, and all of them evidently full of interest in the approaching auction; for Mr. Myer's household furniture, as well as his cattle, were to be sold.

"I am sorry we are quite so early," said Mr. Wood; "for it will be tiresome to wait till they get through the other things and come to sell the animals. However, we can walk about, and amuse ourselves looking at things."

He drove under a shed; and, having fastened the horse, he and Martin followed the people who were moving to-

ward the house. The crowd was too great, however, to make it agreeable; and the house itself was such a low, damp, sunless place, striking a chill into them as they entered it, that they were glad to come out again, and sit on the bench of the piazza.

"Most of the windows of this house face the west and the north," said Martin, looking up at the building.

"And a bad way it is to have them do so," said the miller.

"That is one reason it smells so musty and damp in there," said Martin. "I believe in the sunshine."

"There is life in the sun," remarked the miller. "I wonder that a farmer, of all persons, should make such a mistake. He knows he cannot farm in the shade; and yet he expects his own flesh and

blood to prosper without sunshine, when corn and potatoes will not. For my part, I like my room to have two sunny windows: one towards the east, that I can catch the first ray; and one towards the south, that the sun can pour good humor upon me the whole day."

"Good humor, Mr. Wood?" repeated Martin.

"Yes," said the miller: "the sunshine keeps folks good-humored, just as it makes grain prosper in the fields. By the same rule, people are often fretful who live in dark, damp rooms. They hardly know what is the matter; but they feel so gloomy, they complain in spite of themselves."

"I should think a pleasant, airy, sunny room would be half the battle in cases of sickness," said Martin.

"I think so too," said the miller: "as I said before, the sun is life. Thick window-curtains and close shutters are the enemies of health."

"Animals know the value of sunshine," said Martin. "It is a common thing in our barn-yard, on cool days, to see the cattle take pains to stand in it. Once we had some chickens shut for a time, while their yard was out of order, in a gloomy place, where the sun's rays never quite reached them, but fell on the wall above them. I saw the poor things jump up in the air, day after day, to try and get in this spot of sunshine, and then fall down again to the ground, evidently sad and disappointed."

"When people build houses," said the miller, "for themselves as well as for their animals, they should study care-

fully to let in all the sun they can. If they do not, they throw away one of God's chief blessings, and sooner or later reap their reward, either in their own sufferings, or that of the dumb animals committed to their guardianship. For my part, I would rather suffer myself than inflict pain on a patient, helpless creature who lives to serve me, and whose existence, taken at the best, is full of trials. And now, speaking of animals, while the auctioneer is busy with other things, we had better go look at the horses. I want to know something of them before I bid on them."

The miller rose from his seat on the piazza, and Martin followed him to the stable. They found the place full of visitors, who had gone there with the same intention as themselves. Several men

were busy showing off some of the animals in the yard, leading them by a rope, and making them run back and forth. There were at least a dozen horses for sale; most of them having a forlorn air, as though they had known long lives of hard labor. In one corner of the yard, and drawing scarcely any attention from the visitors, stood a small, almost dwarfish mare: she was not an attractive-looking creature, although evidently in pretty good working condition. By her side, in a little feeble heap, lay a colt not more than four or five days old. It seemed puny and sickly, and half the time kept its eyes closed. A pile of hay had been placed for the mother's convenience; and from this she was slowly eating, pausing now and then to look at the colt, or turn her head to survey the visitors.

"What a queer-looking animal!" said Martin, as Mr. Wood paused, and looked at her.

"Yes," said the miller: "she is queer, just as you say; and those white spots about her eyes and ears make her look queerer. I am not sure, though, but that she would prove a steady, faithful worker; which is what I want. I do not care a great deal about looks; yet, of course, if I could get beauty and goodness too, I should not refuse. — What is the matter with the colt?" he asked, turning to a farm hand who stood near.

"We don't know, sir," said the man. "It is weakly, and that is all we can tell about it."

"Does it mope in this way all the time?"

"Yes, sir: it hardly walks at all. We don't much expect it to live."

The man moved away; and the miller, after looking at the mare again, returned to the stable to inspect the other animals. Martin grew rather tired waiting for the auction at the house to finish, so that that of the cattle could begin. He amused himself as well as he could, however, and was careful not to express his fatigue to Mr. Wood. By and by there was a stir just without the stable, and the hum of approaching voices was heard. The auctioneer appeared, followed by a crowd of men. The horses were each marked in the catalogue by name and number; and, as the sale proceeded, they were brought out one by one into the open air, where all could get an unobstructed view of them. The bidding was moderate: there was little eagerness to buy. Mr. Wood bid once

or twice, but without becoming a purchaser. At length the dwarfish mare was offered for sale. The bidding was slower than before. Mr. Wood bid for her, but apparently without any strong desire to become her owner: he seemed almost as surprised as Martin when he found that his last bid of one hundred dollars had made him her owner.

"And the colt," said the miller, addressing the auctioneer: "what is to become of it?"

"Oh! it goes with the mare," said the man carelessly. "Mr. Myers considers it of no value: he says it is too sick to be worth selling. He thinks it will die."

Leaving the auction-stand, Mr. Wood and Martin approached the mare as she was led back to her feeble colt, which was still lying motionless, with its eyes closed.

"Touch it, Martin," said the miller.

Martin stood nearest to it, and he bent down and smoothed and patted the little head gently. It did not shrink, but opened its eyes slowly, and looked at him. The mother did not like even this liberty to be taken, and walked about restlessly. When Martin took his hand away, she licked the place where it had been, which made both the miller and Martin laugh; and the former said that he thought from that simple act that she was wiser than she looked, and that perhaps she would prove a good bargain.

"How to get the colt home safely is a question I don't know how to answer," remarked the miller. "If it were strong, it could walk; but, being so sick, it must be carried in the wagon; and the jolting may kill it. Besides, the mother will

"Martin bent down and smoothed and patted the little head gently. p. 132.

make a fuss, very likely. I will wait a while longer to see if any farming implements are sold that may be useful to me, before I try what is best to be done."

He was going from the spot, when Martin asked if it would not be as well for him to stay, and watch that no one troubled the mare and the colt. The miller said it would be: so Martin settled himself on top of a rail-fence, rather glad not to mingle with the busy crowd that he saw hurrying hither and thither. Mr. Wood did not remain long in the yard, which, as soon as the few remaining cattle were sold, became deserted by visitors. After resting on his rail for some time, Martin descended, and tried to make friends with the mare. She was very shy, and apparently preferred to be let alone; but, by dint of considerable

coaxing, she allowed him finally to smooth her face. Finding that he did her no harm, which was what she seemed to expect, she submitted afterwards to various little caresses which Martin knew by experience were usually acceptable with her race. He saw from her actions that she had been ill treated, and probably was in the habit of being beaten; and this made him all the more gentle towards her. While he was thus engaged, a quaint-looking old farmer entered the yard, and, after inspecting the buildings about it, came towards the corner where the mare stood. He looked both at the animals and at Martin.

"I say," he asked bluntly, "do you know what is the matter with that colt?"

"No, sir," replied Martin.

"Well, I do," rejoined the new-comer:

"he is starving to death. I know the looks of a hungry colt well enough. The folks here are not wise enough to find out that the mother can't take care of him, or else they would feed him themselves. You belong to the man that has bought him, don't you?"

"I came with him, sir," said Martin.

"Well, you tell him what I say; and, if he takes to feeding the little creature, he can raise him; and, if he don't, he will die on his hands."

After looking around a little more, the old farmer went away. When the miller returned, Martin repeated what he had heard; and it had so favorable an effect, that Mr. Wood said that he would buy some milk of the family, and try the experiment before they started. He wanted the colt to bear the journey; and, if a

little feeding could accomplish it, he was very willing to make the effort. But it was much easier said than done, because the mother was alarmed in the first place, and because the colt did not know how to feed, in the second place, and had to be taught. As soon as he understood, he took but a few languid tastes, and relapsed into quiet again. However, a few moments before he was lifted into the wagon, Martin asked if he might not try once more; and this time, having learned his lesson, and having probably felt some good results, the colt took a good long drink that was very satisfying to all parties. His poor mother was frightened and bewildered when he was tied, and laid on some straw in the wagon; and she dashed about the yard so wildly, that it was difficult to catch her. She,

too, was prepared for the journey by being attached to the wagon; and then Mr. Wood and Martin took their places, and the horse was started. The colt was passive enough; indeed, he had no strength to be otherwise: but the mare snorted and neighed, and pranced at a high rate, and several times during the first mile she seriously impeded the progress of the journey: after that, finding her struggles useless, she submitted.

"What shall I do with the colt?" asked the miller.

"Don't you intend to raise him, Mr. Wood?" asked Martin in a tone of surprise. "He seems a nice little fellow."

"How do you think you will like it if I give him to you?" suddenly demanded the miller.

"Give him to me!" repeated Martin.

"Yes," said Mr. Wood cheerfully: "why shouldn't I? Who has a better right to give him to you?"

"No one," answered Martin, laughing; "but it seems so valuable a gift. He may grow up a fine horse."

"I hope he will, for your sake," returned the miller; "and, as the old farmer said, if we take to feeding him for a time, I have no doubt he can be raised safely. It is worth trying."

"I should be right glad to have him, sir," hesitated Martin; "but Mr. Brooks might not want him about, when he is so helpless, and, and"—

"Oh! I can settle all that," said the miller kindly. "I should not like to separate the colt from his mother for some months: the poor little thing would be happier with her. I'll take care of him,

say till spring: by that time, I am sure Mr. Brooks will not have the least objection to turning him loose for the summer with the rest of his cattle on some of his mountain pasture lands. When fall comes, perhaps you can sell him, and have a nice nest-egg to put in the bank."

"Oh, Mr. Wood!" said Martin, and abruptly paused. He looked back at the colt, patted its head, and added, "I do not believe I could ever bring my mind to sell him. I'd like to keep him, and have him for my own. I'll ask Mr. Brooks. When he is old enough, I might let him out to the farmers in busy seasons, say about ploughing or haying times, and get enough money that way to pay for his keep."

"We'll see," said Mr. Wood. "I know Mr. Brooks will make a generous bargain

with you, and settle it all right for both you and him."

Martin looked back at the colt with another wistful glance. "I don't like to take so valuable a present," said he again.

"The colt is not valuable in one sense," said the miller. "He cost me nothing. He was given to me, and I made no objection: why should you? If he lives and thrives, he will be valuable."

"I'll name him Bertie!" exclaimed Martin. "If Mr. Brooks agrees for me to accept him, I'll name him after your little Bertie."

"I hope he will not take after him, and prove a runaway," said the miller.

"I do not believe Bertie will run away soon again," returned Martin, laughing. "I think he had enough difficulties to make him remember."

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE MILL.

WHEN they came to the farm-house, the miller stopped long enough to have a few words with Mr. Brooks on the subject of the colt.

"What," said Mr. Brooks good-humoredly, "our Martin is becoming a property-holder, is he? Well, I wish him good fortune. I hope the colt will grow up, and do his training credit. Let me see the little creature."

He went to the back of the wagon, and looked at the colt as he lay there in his not very comfortable posture. He rolled his eyes towards the farmer piteously, as

much as to say, "Do get me out of this dreadful predicament!"

"It seems thin, but well built, as near as I can judge," said the farmer: "it's shape is not at all like its mother's. I think Martin has considerable prospect of owning a handsome animal."

Mr. Brooks proposed that he should be given to Martin's care at once, as the trouble of rearing him from his feeble condition might prove annoying; but the miller said he would rather take a little extra trouble than debar the mother of his society.

"It is not humane," said he, "to hurt mother-love without a cause, even in animals. They have to suffer so much in that line, that, when I can prevent it, I like to do so. There is no prettier sight to my mind than that of a calf

or colt frisking around its mother in a pasture-field, and taking comfort while it can. The time comes soon enough when it cannot."

"I should like my horse to have comfort always," said Martin, looking towards his precious possession.

"I hope he will," returned the miller. "I will teach you how to train him by and by."

"Have you any particular method, Mr. Wood?" asked the farmer.

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Wood; "and, what is more, it is unfailing. I teach animals through kindness, entirely. I never use a whip."

"You have found the best way then," called out Mr. Brooks, as, nodding and smiling, the miller drove down the road.

The day but one after this, Martin

walked to the mill to hear how the colt was thriving. Before he reached it, however, he caught a view of the dwarfish mare and her offspring in a meadow that bordered on the pond. The mare cropped the grass, seemingly very well contented with her new quarters. The colt came to the bars of the fence, and eyed Martin with a saucy air that at once amused and surprised him: he could scarcely credit that this was the same creature that he had seen the day of the auction. He was strong enough now to play, and tossed his head hither and thither to dodge Martin's hand as he put it through the bars. Seeing Martin from the mill window, Mr. Wood sent Bertie out with a tin pail of milk, that he might have the satisfaction of

seeing how eager the colt was to put his head in it.

"He don't need coaxing any more," said Bertie; "and this morning he tried to eat grass."

Martin stood admiring the colt, and listening to Bertie's praise of him; and then he went into the mill to have a chat with Mr. Wood. The air, as usual, was full of floating meal. The machinery made so much noise, that it was not easy to talk. Martin sat with Bertie in the window-sill, and watched the great wheels revolve, and the miller moving back and forth at his work. By and by the miller went outside to get purer air; and, sitting down on a bench near the door, he called Martin to take the vacant place beside him. Bertie wanted to come too: as there was no room for him, Martin

held him on his knee; whereat Bertie was better pleased even than if there had been other accommodations.

"How do you find the colt?" asked the miller. "Do you think he looks much as he did on the day of the auction?"

"If I had not known his mother, I should not have recognized him at all," said Martin. "I never saw a greater improvement."

"He was only weak from hunger, just as the old farmer told you," said Mr. Wood.

"I think he will live, and grow healthy and useful. Mr. Wood," said Martin, "how is it that you train horses by kindness? I have always thought that what people call breaking in had to be done with the help of the whip."

"No," said the miller: "a whip is not

necessary. A horse can be trained as a child is trained, through affection, firmness, and patience. It can be taught to know right from wrong, just as a good mother teaches her child. I have trained several of my own horses at different times, as well as those of my neighbors, and always with success. I begin by winning the creature's confidence; I pet him; I show myself his friend under all circumstances; I accustom him to eat bits of bread, sugar, or dainty green food from my hand, till he runs to meet me. If, in accustoming him by degrees to harness, any thing is found to annoy him, I take the part off, and proceed slower."

"How do you accustom him to harness by degrees, Mr. Wood?" asked Martin.

"This way," answered the miller. "At first, when he is young, I put a rope

round his neck, and let him go a long time with only that: but I get him in the habit of being caught by it; which shows him it has a use. Then I add a piece of harness for the head, and take it on and off frequently, that he may consider it an every-day affair; speaking kindly to him as I do so, and rewarding him for any patience he may display. I add to the harness again and again, but no faster than he likes; and I never leave it on long enough to tire him. If I want to get him used to the saddle, I strap a bag or a piece of carpet on him, at first only for a few moments: I gradually extend the time, then try something heavier, and slowly get him to the period when I can place the saddle itself on his back."

"Isn't it very tedious?" asked Martin.

"No," was the reply. "I find the opera-

tion full of interest from beginning to end. If the young animal is affectionate by nature, the work is less, and my satisfaction greater, of course. I like to feel that even dumb brutes are fond of me, and welcome my approach with joy, instead of fear of ill treatment."

"Do you teach them to submit to the guidance of the mouth in the same way?" inquired Martin.

"Yes: by degrees, and through their confidence in me. When the colt grows old enough, I will show you the whole process."

"Mr. Brooks says of course he can go with the other cattle next spring to the pastures on the mountain; but I think he is too precious to be trusted so far away. Somebody might steal him. We go up the mountain very seldom."

"Well, don't let us borrow trouble about the matter," said the miller. "Spring has not come yet; and, when it does, it will be time enough to talk it over."

"Papa," said Bertie, "I saw a few bunches of grapes that looked ripe, to-day: why don't you let me go get some for Martin?"

"That is a good idea," said the miller; "but you are not quite big enough, Bertie, to be trusted to pick them alone: we can all three go. I want Martin to try our grapes, of course."

Saying this, Mr. Wood passed through the mill, and entered the adjoining yard where the grape-vines were located. Bertie ran joyfully ahead, pointing out the bunches he had noticed. The appearance of some few clusters had indeed

changed in the few days since Martin saw them last: the weather had been excellent for ripening.

"There they are!" cried Bertie: "what great blue bunches! When I am a man, papa, I want to have a large vineyard of grapes, like you were talking to mother about yesterday."

"Bertie feels as I do," said Martin. "I want to plant a vineyard too."

"It is a good sign to love to plant and reap," said the miller, carefully climbing up the arbor to reach the grapes. "I am glad to see that Bertie inclines to it already. Do you remember what George Washington says of agriculture, Martin?"

"No, sir," said Martin: "I do not think I have ever heard."

"Well, wait till I come down from this shaky rail, and I'll tell you." The miller

cautiously descended to the ground again, with his hands so full that Bertie danced around him at the sight. All three sat down on the settee under the vines while Mr. Wood divided the grapes.

"These are for mother, Bertie," said he. "Run and take them in the house, and then come and eat yours afterwards." Bertie took them, and entered by the adjacent door.

"This was what Washington said," continued the miller: "'Agriculture is the most healthful, the most useful, and the most noble employment of man.' A truer remark was, I think, never made."

"I used to dislike farming," said Martin, "and thought it dull; but I have changed my mind. I feel nowadays such a wonderful pleasure in digging and raking, and helping even the smallest plant to grow

to its prime, that I am often surprised at myself. I watch things that I have set out; and, as they increase in size, my interest seems stronger every day."

"In the spring," said the miller, "this interest in growing things is apt to be stronger than at any other time, because all Nature is full of joy over her blossoms and new leaves, and we share it with her. A thorough, honest farmer, to my mind, is a noble man. I would rather see Bertie a farmer than have him follow any other occupation. Our grapes are scarcely ripe, after all, Martin; but you can see they are of fine quality."

"Yes, sir," said Martin; "both fine to taste, and fine to look at." Here Bertie returned, and, as usual, nestled up to Martin, and then ate his grapes with child-like zest.

"Yes," repeated he: "I want to grow a *big* vineyard full of grapes, papa."

"Mr. Wood," said Martin, picking meanwhile at the cluster in his hand, "have not grapes been known to be in cultivation many thousands of years? It seems to me that I have heard so."

"Yes," replied the miller with a smile: "we can trace them as far back as the time of Noah. It says in Genesis, 'Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard.' I am sorry to add that wine was used to excess in those old days too; for the same passage tells us, 'Noah drank of the wine, and was drunken.' The vine was intended to be one of our Creator's good gifts; but the human race have perverted it from its use, and converted it into a frequent source of misery. That it was meant to be a bless-

ing, Scripture gives us plenty of evidence; for we learn in it that wine 'maketh glad the heart of man;' and we read, too, that the 'first rain and the latter rain' were promised, that 'the corn and the wine and the oil' might be gathered. Surprising things this first and latter rain produced in those times. Did you ever hear of the grapes of Eshcol?"

"Oh, yes!" returned Martin: "Nelly and I have often wished we could raise things nowadays that could equal them."

"What was Eshcol? tell me, Martin," said Bertie.

"Yes, tell him," said the miller: "little words, by the way, are good for Bertie."

"Once," said Martin, turning to Bertie, and trying to put the story in simple language, — "once, Bertie, a long, long while ago, in the days of the Bible, a man

named Moses sent some other men into a land called Canaan. They were called spies, because they were to spy out things, and come back and tell Moses how Canaan looked. He wanted them to examine the state of the fruit of the country, and to bring him some of it, so that he could judge of it himself, of its quality."

"Yes," assented Bertie, with an air of interest in the recital.

"These spies journeyed on and on; and whenever they saw fine fruit or grains, they examined them carefully. By and by they came to a brook named Eshcol, and there they found grapes in very large bunches indeed. They picked off one; and it took two of the spies to carry it between them, hanging from a staff, or cane, back to Moses."

As Martin ceased speaking, Bertie threw

up his head, and gazed at the grapes overshadowing him, probably to search out a bunch that could give him an idea, by its size, of this famous one of which he had just heard.

"I think," said Mr. Wood, "that the Eshcol grape must have been similar to a kind which still grows in the warm regions of the Old World. It bears bunches which are very large indeed."

"When I am a man, I'd like to get some of the vines, then," said Bertie gravely, "for my vineyard."

"The vine is very long-lived," said Mr. Wood after a while. "It requires but little cultivation, and, with its generous crop, repays a farmer amply."

"Do you know, Mr. Wood," asked Martin, "the exact process by which raisins are made?"

"Yes," replied the miller: "in the first place, a warm climate is necessary. In Spain and Portugal, they are cured by cutting the stalk of the bunch half through when the grapes are almost ripe. Being suspended by their stalks on the vine, the sun candies them. As soon as they are dry, they are taken down. I have heard of another plan; how true it is, I don't know: it is to dip the newly gathered grapes in lye made from the ashes of grape-cuttings, and afterwards to expose them to the sun."

"That does not sound inviting," said Martin. "I like the first way the best."

"There are medicinal qualities in the grape," said Mr. Wood, "which have helped many sick persons to recover their health. In Europe, in its vine-bearing regions, large grape Cures are estab-

lished under the care of regular physicians. These houses are always crowded with invalids during the season when the fruit is ripe."

"Bertie would like such a cure if ever he got sick, I am sure," said Martin, looking down at the small fingers plying so industriously from the bunch to his lips.

"I should not object to it myself," said the miller, smiling. It sounds to me both wise and agreeable. Nature has many such balms for the ills to which flesh is heir; but they are so simple, they pass unnoticed. Travellers tells us that the half-starved peasants who are put in charge of the vineyards in Europe become hearty and rosy; and even the flocks of birds who are attracted to the spot grow fat and saucy."

"Well," said Martin, rising to go home,

"I feel as if I wanted to begin my vineyard at once. It is pleasant even to talk of grapes."

"I'll help you to begin it," said the good miller. "The next time I am passing your way, I'll leave a few young vines for you at the door; and in the spring, which is the favorable period, you shall have a whole bundle of cuttings. Ask Mr. Brooks for a small spot of suitable ground, — and I know he will not deny it for so good a purpose, — and make it ready with your spade. I always want to help people set out vineyards, because they are a blessing to the land. Yes, yes, Martin! begin at once; and I can assure you beforehand that you will also begin a great deal of healthful happiness."

CHAPTER VII.

MARTIN'S VINEYARD.

"A VINEYARD, eh?" inquired Nelly. "Well, what next, Martin?"

"I can't tell yet," replied Martin; "but I hope it will be something as pleasant."

"What made you think of it?" said Nelly.

"Mr. Wood advised me about it, and is going to bring me some vines; and Mr. Brooks gave me leave to use any bit of ground I wanted in this field:" so saying, Martin drove down his spade with energy, and turned up the earth.

"The ground looks good," remarked Nelly. "I hope the vines will grow in it. Do you mean to make it richer?"

"Yes," replied Martin. "Mr Wood brought leaf-mould from the woods for his vines; and I mean to do the same."

"But there are so many rocks about here!" complained Nelly. "Why did you not select a better spot when you had the whole field?"

"I have been studying the subject," said Martin, leaning on his spade; "and I believe the rocks that you do not like are going to be of great assistance to me in forcing the grapes. I have read some of the farming books in the house, and that is the conclusion I arrived at last night. They will protect the vines from the north and east winds, and they will attract a great deal of heat from the sun; and that will bring the grapes forward earlier."

"Martin," said Nelly, sitting down on

"A vineyard, eh?" inquired Nelly. "Well, what next, Martin?" p. 162.

one of the rocks in question, "I think you ought to plough the ground for a vineyard, and not spade in."

"I know I ought," returned Martin; "but then I have not the time at present; and, for the few vines I am going to start with, deep digging will answer. How did you find out about ploughing?"

"Once, when I was a very little girl," said Nelly, "I saw Mr. Stevens laying out the ground for his vineyard, over on the hill. It was so curious a sight, that I stopped and looked through the fence at the workmen for a long time. They ploughed twice in the same furrow, one plough following right after the other; and then they harrowed the ground thoroughly. I had never seen any thing like it: so I asked Mr. Stevens why he was doing it. He said it was to let the

air in, and turn up the good earth. I have always remembered that ploughing, because Mr. Stevens said 'yearth;'" and Nelly seemed entertained over the remembrance.

"His vineyard is a fine one: there is no mistake about it," said Martin.

"Are you going to put your leaf-mould far down, or only just a foot or so deep?" asked Nelly.

"Well," said Martin, "to tell the truth, Nelly, there are so many different ways of managing, according to the agricultural books, that the difficulty with me seems to be to make a choice. One writer says, manure deeply; and another says, if you manure deeply, the roots will be drawn down deeply, and that will take away from the strength of the branches above ground. I was puzzled last night,

when I went to bed, over all the various methods of grape-raising."

"I expect," said Nelly, "that a good way is to study up the matter, and then use one's common sense according to one's materials."

"Common sense!" repeated Martin. "Last night, when I shut those farming books, I felt as if I had no common sense at all. I was all in a maze with the contradictions. However, I feel a little recovered this morning. I should not be surprised if Mr. Wood brought the vines to-day."

"Some farmers laugh at and despise books; but father does not. He says he likes to keep up with the improvements of the times."

"I have always found," said Martin, "that the old farmers who despise agri-

cultural books are a very slow-going, benighted set. They usually raise wheat, rye, corn, cabbages, and potatoes, and don't care for any of the fancy things, as they call them. I have known farmers, and farmers' wives too, who thought it a sinful waste of time to keep a strawberry-bed."

"Just as if strawberries were not intended to be raised and eaten!" said Nelly. "They are one of the comforts."

"They are more than that," returned Martin: "they are health-giving."

"Mr. Stevens likes to have a nice vineyard," said Nelly, "because he can make money from it by sending the grapes to market; but I heard Mrs. Stevens tell mother that he never will consent to plant any sweet table-corn for his family,

but makes them eat the coarse field-corn year after year. He says it is good enough for them, and saves the trouble of a separate patch."

"That is what I call benighted," said Martin. "Sometimes, farmers show out queer traits like that, and bring a character for closeness on all who follow the business. They are forced to be very exact in order to succeed; but they need not be mean any more than other men need to be so."

"I am glad father is not a mean farmer," said Nelly. "He likes to be just; but mother says he likes to be generous too."

"No, indeed! Mr. Brooks is not mean," said Martin, speaking and spading with emphasis. "If there is a man in this place who wants to deal liberally with all persons, it is Mr. Brooks."

he reflected on the situation he had chosen, the better he was satisfied with it.

"I shall certainly have early grapes," said he aloud: "it is just the right sort of a spot. Besides these vines and the cuttings Mr. Wood has promised me, I know I can get more from Mr. Stevens next spring. I think I shall be able to stock my vineyard well, and with choice specimens too. How I shall watch them! What care I mean to take of them! Not a weed shall show its head about them. The whole strength of the ground shall go in the right direction. And then the result!" added Martin, glancing towards the gray wall of rocks, as though he already saw beside them thrifty vines loaded with delicious grapes. "In five or even four years' time, if I am success-

ful, I shall have fruit to give away, and fruit to sell, — to say nothing of the comfort I shall take, — and there will be another nest-egg, as Mr. Wood calls it, for the bank. But I don't intend to be a mean farmer, whatever happens. Here comes Nelly: so now we can start. I know where there is a great bed of leaf-mould, as black with age and richness as it can be; and it is not far off, either."

Nelly joined him, and the two were speedily on the way to the woods; Martin rolling the wheelbarrow, and Nelly carrying her basket. Nelly loved the woods dearly: there was no question of that fact. She rarely let slip an opportunity of visiting them, particularly if, as in the present case, she could have company. She knew many of the names of the

little wild plants that grew among the brushwood or in the clefts of the rocks; and she always went home with her hands full of trailing vines, or ferns, or delicate wood-flowers. Martin loved the woods too, but not so deeply or so finely as Nelly. On the present occasion, many were Nelly's exclamations over her discoveries along the path under the trees that led towards the bank of leaf-mould. Her basket seemed in a fair way to be filled with other things. Lichens, mosses, and crimson berries, all seemed to abound unusually, or else Nelly's eyes were more on the alert.

Martin was trundling along with his wheelbarrow, a little ahead, in consequence of Nelly's frequent stoppages, and whistling a tune softly to himself, when he heard her call him.

"What is it?" he asked, looking back.

"Oh, do bring your spade here, Martin! *please*," she said: "I want you to dig up this tree for me. It is the loveliest"—

"Tree!" echoed Martin, a little out of patience: "how foolish to dig up a tree! You know I have no time to spare, Nelly."

"It is only a little one," said Nelly: "it will take but a moment. I never saw such a beauty!"

"What kind is it," asked Martin, advancing with the spade.

"It is an oak," was the reply. "It is only about a yard high, and the trunk is as straight as a poker, and the branches are well balanced on every side. I long to take it home and plant it."

Martin admired the little tree as well

as Nelly, when he saw it. It was certainly of a remarkably symmetrical shape, and it appeared sound and healthy.

"I do not suppose there will be the least difficulty in making it grow," said Martin, as he put his spade in the ground at its roots.

"I'll treat it to leaf-mould as well as the rose-bush," said Nelly. "I'll tell you where I'll plant it, Martin; at the top of your rocks. I'll put it there in honor of your vineyard; and, as it enlarges, it will help to shelter it from the north. Don't you think that is a useful idea?"

"Excellent," said Martin. "It will stand there like a sentinel on duty. But you must find deep enough soil for its roots to spread."

He dug it up, and laid it carefully in the basket.

"If the place agrees with its constitution," remarked Nelly, "and it is alive this time next year, I'll seek another oak-tree and put near it; and so I'll keep on, one a year, till I begin to have a grove."

"Why only one a year?" inquired Martin, starting the wheelbarrow again.

"I want to mark the age of your vineyard," replied Nelly; "and that seems a pleasant way. Eight or ten years from now, when we are both grown up, there will be eight or ten young oaks to tell us how long your grape-vines have been planted."

"That is a good plan," said Martin; "but, by the time next year comes, I am afraid we shall both forget that another tree is due."

"I can try, anyhow," said Nelly; "and the sight of this one will remind me."

"So it will," returned Martin: "so you can be growing a grove of oak-trees at the same time that I am making a vineyard."

When Martin was rolling the second barrow on its way home, he caught sight of a wagon coming up the road, which, in the distance, he thought was that belonging to Mr. Wood. He hastened his speed accordingly, and reached his vineyard before he heard the wagon drawing up at the gate. He ran towards it, and was in time to fasten the horse to the hitching-post; Mr. Wood expressing his intention of helping Martin dispose of the vines, as soon as he heard that the ground was prepared for their reception.

It was with no little gratification that Martin led the way to the rocks, where Nelly, having borrowed Martin's spade in

his absence, was already hard at work making a home for her tree.

"That is right, Nelly," said the miller. "I am glad to see you have a taste for agricultural pursuits."

Nelly explained that she was transplanting a tree from the woods in honor of the vineyard. Mr. Wood said that her kindly idea was well worthy of being carried out; and, taking the oak in his hand, he admired its beautiful shape. He told Nelly that it would be an ornament to the place, and that, besides, it would bring pleasant thoughts in its connection with the vineyard; the location of which he praised highly, stating to Martin that the protection and heat of the masses of rock would have just the effect he expected.

"If the soil where you intend planting

was also rocky, it would alter the whole face of affairs; but I perceive by the depth you have dug that it is not."

"I have sounded with a crowbar too, sir," said Martin; "but I have touched nothing stony."

"Then I do not see," returned the miller, "but that you have every thing reasonably in your favor."

He untied, as he spoke, the bundle of vines under his arm. Martin's eyes glistened as he saw at least eight or ten, each of them apparently well rooted.

"These are not all from my own place," said the miller. "I had not so many in a state to move. A neighbor gave me some, and told me they are of the Isabella and Catawba varieties. So you have three kinds, which will do very well for a beginning."

He set out four or five, showing Martin how to spread the roots; but, on finding that the supply of leaf-mould was limited, he said the rest must wait till Martin could go for more.

"I did not expect such a number, sir," said Martin respectfully and thankfully. "I am a great deal richer than I had any thought of being."

So the miller went back to his wagon, followed by warm expressions of Martin's gratitude; and Martin himself started again for the woods.

THE END.